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Words to the Mourner;

OR,

RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS.

BY

MARIA J. BISHOP,

AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS IN A SICK CHAMBER."

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY E. P. DUTTON & CO.

1860.

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TO MRS. S. B. P.

Dear and Honored Madam:

Permit one whom your kindness has bound to you by many ties, whom your Christian character has taught to revere, to express, in a slight degree, the gratitude and esteem which you have inspired, by dedicating to you this trifling volume, which is in some degree addressed to mourners.

To you, madam, who have known the heart of a mourner, reflections, mingling a shade of melancholy with the bright lights of heavenly hope, can want no recommendation, even were they penned by one less favored than your partiality has rendered the writer. It is, therefore, with a feeling of entire confidence, that I presume to add

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your honored name to these pages, feeling that by you they will be received with unmerited favor.

Composed at different periods, under varying circumstances of joy or sorrow, they are now offered to the public, their sole design being to glorify the Being who gave the joy, or cheer the heart of those who share in the sorrow.

Should such be in any degree the honor conferred upon them, that the glory may be His who dictated them, and that the thanks of the sorrowing be rendered, dear madam, to you, at whose suggestion many of them were written, is the sincere wish of her who has the honor to be

Your obliged and grateful servant,

M. J. B.

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Words to the Mourner.

AFFLICTION.

O, THERE are joys for an angel's coming, bright as the dew-drop which trembled and fell in sinless Paradise! It is when the Lord reveals to those who love him something of the brightness and the beauty of his designs, as he has written them upon the pages of his providence.

Tell us not of affliction, who have fled for refuge to Jesus. We bound to meet the lion in sorrow's dark arena, for quick and bright as the lightning from heaven waves the wing of the protecting angel to chain him in the dust; and like those that frowned and fell asleep at the

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feet of glorious Daniel, so do we fall asleep on the monster's mane, and dream of heaven.

Count not the legions of the Christian's enemies! Be it their numbers are beyond sum, and environ the heart with a serried phalanx of trials. Faith brushes with her warm and holy finger the tear from the believer's eye, and bids him lift his gaze to where the mists of doubt and fear are rolling from the mountain of his God's high help — where fiery horsemen crowd their lightning ranks — where burning chariot on chariot rolls, and "Touch not mine Anointed" is the thunder of their wheels.

There are consolations in every trial of life, which gleam upon the eye of faith in every situation. There is a *silver* side to the heaviest cloud of affliction; and, as it rolls its folded wreaths around the spirit, it illumines it with a flood of glory. There

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is *one* dew-drop at least on some leaf of the flower of life, and on the brier of affliction blooms some fresh bud of beauty and blessing in *every* long night of "hope deferred."

O, it is enough for the Christian to hear the silver tones of his divine Master rising above the din and turmoil of life—"Follow thou me." Follow me where the leaden sea of sorrow stretches its still waters before you; and the wave, foaming with affliction, is ready to break on the spirit.

Yes, Lord, we will follow thee, and see the waters *part*, hissing before the fiery columns of thy protection, and the waves crowd on each other, rushing from the face of the Christian's God.

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LIGHT IN THE CLOUD.

SERAPHS' voices softly fall
On my heart with silvery call,
Whispering of my Father's love,
Singing of a home above.

Hear them tell what glories wait
For the spirit desolate:
While each liquid lyre again
Trembles to their soft *Amen.*

What though sorrow's cloud may spread
Its dark folds around my head;
Silver fringed, it breaks away,
When my God his smiles display.

Point not to the tempest's wing:
Glories *there* are gathering;
Holy joy in midnight hour,
Ceres-like, expands its flower.

See the jewelled rainbow glow
On the deepest cloud of woe,
And the dew in diamond shower
Glitters on affliction's brier.

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Hope and Peace are weaving *here*
Garlands watered by a tear,
Telling that affliction even
Is the dawning light of heaven.

SEEKING GOD.

How glorious the privilege, how transcendent the blessing, which is included in the *word*, which follows the *fact*, of seeking God!

It is to open heaven with praises *now*, and *then* to feel the refreshing dew-drops of his goodness descend — O, how softly! — and glitter in a gem of love upon each event through the twilight of affliction, and in the gathering night-cloud of *death*.

It is to treasure up his sacred *Word*, deep, *deep* in the heart, and hallow each chamber of memory with holy thought and association; to let the understanding soar,

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lark-like, from its blessed pages, and grapple with the mighty truths of eternity, and then, turning from the record of his doings of *old*, seek him in all the dealings of his providence.

How beautifully peaceful to watch for the hand of our God, as it is seen in every opening flower of his goodness! to contemplate *all* of life, undisturbed by the swelling of our *own* will, reflected in *that* clear lake — the *will* and attributes of our God.

If there is happiness in prayer, in the ordinances of religion, in the society of Christians, there is even a *more* lofty joy in ascending the mount with Abraham, and watching the success of prayer — in hearing the voice of an interposing *God* in the darkest hour of adversity.

And of those who *thus* seek him will he be *found;* for "he said not to the house of

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Israel, Seek ye me in vain." Yes, he will be gloriously found, where the widow and the orphan stand beside the opening grave, numbering their departed joys by the fast-falling tear. O, *then* the eyes of those who have *sought* Him behold Jesus approaching. He flings light into the sepulchre! He touches the very bier. He gently whispers, "Weep not."

And a gladsome *light* he makes to shine in the sick chamber. *There* he most touchingly is found, breathing coolness on the burning forehead of fever, and resting the aching head on a pillow of peace.

Nor is his presence confined *alone* to the season of suffering, but to the heart that loves him, that trusts him, that looks to him, he is the rising, but *never* setting sun of their existence. And *all* the joys of life are but a halo around the favor of their God.

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O Christian, it is not only your privilege to *seek*, but your glory to cry with more ardor than Archimedes, "I have found! I have found!" And may his blessed Israel *now*, as in the days of Gideon, whatever may befall, feel that God is *with* them. And may *they* who seek him hear the voice of the encouraging angel saying, "Go in *this* thy might, for God is with thee."

PRAYER.

HOLY is the language, high the privilege, of incense-breathing, fervent, filial prayer. It is as if the mystical ladder which Jacob saw were set beside each lowliest disciple, and swift-winged angels, descending, clasp him in a holy embrace, and quick as thought bear him up to heaven.

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Lofty, encouraging thought, that the trumpet that peals laudits to the conqueror is unheard in heaven! The cannons which proclaim a nation's victory echo only from the hills which surround them, and peaceful angels never hear their boom. But "My Father," whispered from the cottage hearth by the peasant's child, stirs their soft wings with joy, and angelic fingers sweep their silver harps in ecstasy at the gentle, lisping prayer.

Prayer, high, hallowed prayer, Esther-like, approaches the sacred "court," forbidden to *all* beside, and kisses Heaven's sceptre; and whether poured from the burning lips of a rapt Isaiah, or the *last* wailing "Lord, remember me" of dying penitence, is greeted with the instant answer, "This day shalt thou be blessed."

True, we cannot tell what form the bless-

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ing will take; whether a mighty angel, armed with the lightning, shall fly, quick as its flash to Hezekiah's rescue, and with *one* stroke lay his enemies in the dust, or whether the fields of time, ploughed *deep* by ardent prayer, shall *first* be watered by a fast-falling tear, ere they wave *thick* with a harvest of *rapture*.

But O, let the Christian remember, that prayer, as if robed in some of the omnipotence of Him whom it addresses, "moves the mighty hand that moves the world;" and He, at whose word to a guilty world "seven thunders utter their voices," listens, as they die away, to the unspoken petition, "Lord, have mercy upon us."

Prayer is the key of heaven,
And opes its golden door;
Prayer — to its wish is given
Each gift a God can pour.

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Prayer — hear the angels' anthem
At its soft tones arise;
Prayer pleads the sinner's ransom,
And penetrates the skies.

Prayer rears for God a temple,
In which he well may dwell;
Prayer, ardent, pure, and simple,
Defies the power of hell.

Prayer at the feet of Jesus
Exhausts devotion's store;
Prayer cries, "From sin release us!"
And heaven can give no more.

THE BEAUTIFUL PROMISE.

"All things work together for good to those who love God."

BEAUTIFUL promise! fit for a saint in glory to bind about his brow in a motto twined with immortal amaranths!

All things! — O, bright angels *here* wreathe sickness with holy joy, and beset

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affliction, as a fair pearl, with many a shining blessing.

All things! — then the arrow that sped to a mother's heart, despatching her darling on an angel's wing to heaven, sends him *back* again to that heart a little ministering spirit, bearing the gift of sanctified affliction. And the dying saint, bowing himself, like Jacob on his bed, is about to lead to heaven the orphan band he is leaving with a firmer step than ever before; while the transparent light that soon will stream from his pale forehead becomes a burning background to every holy precept, to each glowing sentence of devotion he ever uttered.

"*All* things work together for *good*." Then let the storm sweep on rapid and raven wing around the head of the Christian, and the wave dash foam-flakes in the path of those who fear their God, manifest-

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ing his protecting glory, or bearing them, as on eagles' pinions, unto himself.

All things work together
  For their good, whom God hath blest;
And mingled mercies gather
  To bear them to their rest.

Affliction, on its pinions,
  Like Noah's faithful dove,
Throughout his broad dominions
  Bears the olive of his love.

There's not a lonely hour
  That presses on the heart
But hath a holy power
  Sweet comfort to impart.

Behold, where Faith is wreathing
  Soft garlands of delight,
There Sorrow's sighs are breathing
  O'er scattered blossoms bright.

Yet, from the withered rose tree
  Hope plucks the dying flower,
And flies, our glorious God, to thee,
  To deck some heavenly bower.

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NATURE AND RELIGION.

BEAUTIFUL is Nature, when she flings the mists of winter from her youthful countenance, and stands forth in all the blushing bridal show of spring! The poet and the philosopher then own her sweet influence. But it is for the Christian to read in her gentlest touches the characters of a message from heaven, and to behold in her brightest graces the seal of a royal charter.

Yes, it is rapture to open her fair volume and study each chapter in the light of divine love; to see in the beam of the rising sun the glorious emblem of an incarnate God, and in every glad fountain and sunny brooklet that dashes in liquid silver, or ripples in joy throughout the green valleys of earth, the glittering gifts

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and shining graces of the blessed Spirit; to hear in the rustle of the tree and the wave of each bough the converse of Christians, and learn from the soft whisper of every stirring leaf to "believe in the communion of saints."

To the Christian's eye, the rose first tells of his Saviour, and then seems to burn in crimson blushes at man's forgetfulness of him; and there is not a note that rings through her sweet choir, — not a grateful chant from the blackbird or the thrush, — but to him rings an interlude of praise to the sublime and lofty song of seraphs, and sounds a dying echo to the strain of "Holy, holy," that ever rings around the throne of the Maker of all.

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VOICE OF NATURE.

"There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

SOFTLY, as if an angel sighed,
When evening's stars are slowly stealing,
Through heaven's deep and azure tide
Comes then a voice, God's love revealing.

'Tis borne upon the zephyr's wing,
Which stirs the floweret's velvet blossom;
Its music, in the wild bee's ring,
Wakes holy thought in each pure bosom.

It tells us of a Father's hand,
Of a Redeemer's deep compassion,
That first creation's wonders planned,
And did redemption's glories fashion.

Where the wild vine its clusters twine,
Where the rich moss-rose blooms in beauty,
There is a language all divine,
That speaks of God, of heaven, of duty.

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And where the western clouds display
All heaven's glories from their fringes,
It seems the gate of endless day,
And heaven's portal turns its hinges.

Methinks an angel form it bears,
Where the deep glories richly gather,
Speaking to life's immortal heirs
Some message from their God and Father.

The tree, the bird, the silver moon,
All bear the signature of heaven;
They come, a high and holy boon;
They tell of Him by whom 'tis given.

THE SCRIPTURE.

DEEP and rich is the gift our God has given us in revelation! In it he has, as it were, gathered up the moral ruins of our nature, and remodelled the shattered edifice, and the broken arches here unite, and form a temple fitted for His own most holy habitation.

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When we enter the threshold of Scripture, and lift the consecrated veil,—wrought by the *letter*, but adorned by the *spirit*,—O, then, the spirit lays off the worldly sandal, and steals with a light step from wonder to wonder, and from one flashing glory to another, for she feels that she is treading on holy ground.

Here the glittering sentences of the Holy Spirit flash forth in letters of burning light; the goodness and the greatness of our God, and high thoughts, too deep for the penetration of archangels, tell the loveliest disciple of Jesus the story of man's redemption.

Now, we hear the thunder-rolling chariot, and the mountains tremble, while advances "the Lord God of Elijah!" And then the soft, dove-like pleadings of the Spirit sigh forth, "Why will ye die, O Israel?" "How shall I give thee up, my beloved?"

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Now, the lofty tones of Moses thrill like a trumpet-note over dying Egypt and trembling Palestina—"The Lord hath triumphed gloriously!" And then, the sweet harp of David sends forth harmony so soft, so holy, that angel-choristers must bend from heaven to listen to a strain so pure, so like their own. Yes, as we bow in the portal of this holy knowledge, the opening truths fling wide their leaves of light before us, and the heart and the lip confess, "This is the gate of heaven."

THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

How much there is in the various trials of life to make the heart of those who love the Lord peaceful, contented, *joyous!* There are no circumstances in which we can be placed, but in them appear bright rays flashing fresh demonstrations

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of a Father's love upon the Christian's heart. There are deep lines of *goodness* engraven upon all the dealings of our God, and the devout mind loves to read the heavenly tracery, sorrow-chiselled, upon the marble of our nature.

Believer, what sorrow is it which droops your head? And to what measure of woe are you keeping time by the dropping tear? You have lost an honored father! I grant the affliction heavy. A pious father! O, there is a mighty clasp *undone*, which binds us to earth, when, with sorrowing Elisha, we have to cry, "My father! my father!" Yet the believing eye may catch a glimpse of the burning chariot, as it rolls heavenward. Christian, thank thy merciful God, that he was spared — (not till you could *requite* — for that is impossible) — but until you could lay up treasure in heaven, by "honoring your father."

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You have lost a mother beloved! Keen is the anguish, bitter is the pang, when a mother's *last*, loving look kisses the heart with a soft farewell. O, how fast the hot tears rain upon her pale, sweet forehead through the dreary night-watch of the soul, which commences at a *mother's* death bed.

Could her circlet of glory be partly set with her children's tears, how thickly crowded its pearls would be! We clasp the cold hand which first embraced us, and feel as if a mother's love would make the cold grave warm enough for us to nestle there beside her. Yet even here there is cause for gratitude. Were not threescore years enough for our precious mother to have suffered the ills woven in the webwork of life? And shall we not thank God that *we* were left to smooth her pillow, rather than she should be suffered, like "weeping Rachel," to mourn for her children!

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Yes, lay her gentle head in the dust, and rear above it — not monuments of marble — but a column of hallowed memories deeply engraven with sorrowing affection. Plant not the rose and evergreen alone around her pillow! But adorn her memory with the never-dying flower of a holy life; and wear her gentle precept, as a fair signet upon the brow, until it is exchanged for a brighter diadem of glory.

Or has some infant bud, just bursting, been nipped by the chilly wind of the spring of life, bending your domestic rose tree to the earth by the rude snatching of one tender twig?

O, mourn not, nor lament that one fragile plant from your garden of household roses should be transplanted, ere it had bowed before the cold breezes of earth, to bloom alone in heaven.

You weep! Yet as you weep, remember

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that a lightsome little seraph is fluttering from bower to bower of heaven, and its tiny fingers tremble along its silver harp.

Do you regret adding a soft echo to the peal of "Holy, holy, holy!" which ever circles in harmony around the throne of the Most High? Or do you grieve that your little one, ere it had been educated in the school of affliction, is tutored by some beaming angel, where to begin endless praises, and practised in the heavenly art of rapture.

Or why, ye youthful band of mourners, wending, with slow step and quick-beating heart, your sorrowful way to some fair Bethany-tomb, do you gem with bright tears the heavy pall that wraps in its solemn fold one whose thoughts were once as buoyant as yours were yesterday?

Remember that Jesus will meet you at the tomb; and possibly not until "they

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roll away the stone," will he speak. Say not, in the bitterness of grief, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" for he saw the dart fly, and dipped it in his love, that laid your Lazarus low; and he shall really, truly—in limb and feature, in glance and tone—arise! Believest thou this?

Wreathe not earth's fairest flowers around the pale form of your gentle sister, for angels, it may be, are wreathing her harp with fairer! And every tear she ever shed on earth is now a pearl of her Redeemer's stringing in her coronet of joy.

O, your mourning garments would bleach in one blush of the joy of those, who, young in years, but aged in saintly converse, are pouring *now* their anthem of rapture in the pause of the angels' hosanna.

O for a prophet's burning glance, to look down the long avenue of cypresses to

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the heavenly myrtles beyond — to gaze through a vista of tapering tombstones to the temple tomb of Jesus, which spans them all with its magnificent arch, and, as the Lord of life arises, see the angel roll away the stone, and under it forever crush Death for his disciples.

DEATH.

TELL, angels, what is death?
Through what domain, boundless and weariless,
Wings the undying soul? What is the mystery
Our being binds fast in its icy spell?
O, bow your star-crowned heads, ye spirits bright,
Ye who the righteous tenderly uphold,
The guardians, doubtless, of the holy dead,
And tell, — if man may listen to the tale,
Of bright immortal mansions, — how they rise;
How shines the pearly gate, the portal fair;
When opes to call a pilgrim to his home.
O, what is death? We see its print upon the marble [brow,

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Where the long lashes droop in endless sleep;
Where the thick tress untwines its heavy curls,
And the young head, that bears it, meek and low,
Rests in a strange, still slumber.
O, what is death? These cold and chiselled lips,
Sealed in unbroken silence, might they speak,
And tell us of the home where Jesus lives,
How would they lure us with the holy tale!
These little hands, folded as if in prayer —
Say, what is the petition? Silent still
I gaze and wonder; long to pierce the veil
That envious death has dropped so thick, so full,
Between my friend and heart.
Affection bends again above thy form,
And seeks one answering look — in vain.
Thou wilt not, wouldst not wake.
Beautiful sleeper, rest! Pillow thy head,
Calm, still, and peaceful, on a Saviour's love,
Until, with angel shout of jubilee,
The resurrection trumpet, high and clear,
Shall usher in of life the glorious morn.
Come, then, high faith, with vision bright and pure,
Pierce this dense mist, and roll these clouds away;
With inspiration's bright and holy key
Turn back the wards of death, uplift the veil

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Which thy strong hand alone is nerved to bear,
And open wide the realms of Paradise.
The clouds grow crimson *now*, and glories crowd,
Like night's rich galaxy, death's darksome sky.
The portal which barred out mortality,
Gemmed with God's mercies, flashing with his love,
Ringing salvation from its golden hinge,
Turns at thy holy touch, and o'er it spans
This high inscription, breathed in Galilee,
By a Redeemer's lip — "I am the way."
The door I dreaded is the gate of life!
'Tis my Redeemer — 'tis the mighty God,
The way, the resurrection, and the life.
That veil grows pervious; we can pierce it now;
It hides the inner sanctuary of love,
And drops its silken, glory-fringed fold
Before the holiest ark of endless joy.
It screens a Saviour from his people's gaze;
It just parts Jesus from his orphaned church,
And hangs its soft and self-illumined fold
Between my spirit and my Father's love.
Drop the rich fold again; faith, lift it not.
It gently shades the high Shechinah beam
Of love omnipotent and endless bliss!
And drapery, wove by the bright hands of Heaven,

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Waves light before our peaceful, palm-crowned home.
On yester noon, the fold hung darkly there;
At even it lifted, and the light streamed through,
As linked in angel hands to her reward,
The meed of faith and life-long charity.
Our dear and gentle sister passéd there.
Said I the light streamed through? It glitters yet,
A silver radiance on the path we tread,
And beaming seraphs float in every ray,
And lift the heart from the believer's tomb,
To God, to immortality, to heaven.

LIFE.

LIFE is, to the Christian, to roam through a beautiful gallery, where breathing pictures of goodness leap out from the canvas of infinite love! It is to walk with Devotion through gardens of happiness, as she undoes the wicket of mercy; to expatiate among clustering joys, "a *little* lower than the angels."

It is to weave a thousand opportunities

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of doing service to our fellow-creatures into this bright motto, "Glory to God—good will to man." Life is a high and a hallowed thing. It is the school of an immortal education; it is the seed-plot of a heavenly garden; and its fair-springing plants of faith, and love, and hope are watered by tears of penitence, warmed by the bright beam of charity, and trellised and supported by every holy deed. Could we at all times realize the end and foresee the issues that depend on that opening bud of *eternity*—an *hour*—how anxious should we be to seize the fleeting fugitives, and press them into the service of our Lord!

Time becomes a *temple* to the devout heart, and the labor of love is its liturgy; grateful and joyous thoughts are the choir; and the love of a Redeemer throws its soft light down its longest, darkest aisle.

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SPRING.

BEAUTIFUL Spring! She hangs her bright garlands from bough to bough; she shakes from her sunny locks the curling tassels of the larch; she stoops to write her Maker's goodness on the ground; and the meek daisy blooms beneath her touch. At her smile earth bursts into beauty; and nature, arrayed in garments of gladness, dances to meet her.

Yet to the worldly eye cold as the icicle, she melts; her beauty, though he must own it perfectly chiselled, like an inanimate statue, breathes no message from his God to his heart.

But the Christian hears in the first carols of spring the heavenly lay, and the very chant of the angels, "Behold, I bring you tidings of joy."

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Yes, to him the tidings of the *resurrection* morning, when, in a universal spring tide, the trees of the Lord shall blossom in flowers of immortal joy, in all the borders of the heavenly Eden; and he looks upon the opening cup of every flower as a royal signet engraved with the superscription of his God, "I will do it," impressed upon every loving promise he has given.

For what are spring and opening summer but the loving promise given to Noah, which has just blossomed? And as Faith waves the blooming almond-rod of spring, and touches with it each archive of revelation, and each dealing of our God, all assume new loveliness under its vivifying touch, and deck with immortal flowers those fields of future peace where the redeemed shall walk forever.

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HEAVEN.

HEAVEN! How much of rest — how much of hope! What a halo of resignation is there to the weary heart in the very word heaven! It rings on the spirit like the amen of an angel's anthem.

But, O! shall we confine heaven to some far-off point of God's dominions, where the heart's warm affections grow chilled in winging the dreary distance? O, no! Heaven is but the rich drapery of the love of our God; and where *He* is, *there* is heaven.

It is the infolding fire which flashes round his throne, and where the Chebar-vision of his glory rolls triumphant over the bowed spirit. *There*, the waving of the cherubs' wings proclaims, *is* heaven!

Where Nature reads to the rising sun, in

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letters of shining pearl, imprinted upon her gardens and wide-spread thickets, the story of the beauty and glory of her Maker, — to the Christian's eye, as he turns the flashing page, and beholds each chapter headed with the loving smile of a Redeemer, *there* is heaven.

And where the mother watches, through the cold, still midnight, by the cradle of her little one, and from the intent gaze of her agony the tear scarce dares to drop on its little fevered face, praying for resignation, and then, as her night watch ends, folds down the tiny eyelids, with the submissive prayer, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be his name," — as the angels fold back the curtains of their bright dwelling to admit the little stranger to their brilliant number, the peaceful light streams through on the mourner's head, and *there* is heaven.

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And as the orphan kneels beside the grave, hallowed by almost holy reverence, and waters the wild flowers which grow there with hot tears, sobbing out, "Dear mother!" and then, checking the rebellion that would arraign the will most holy, feeling that "parents passed into the skies" draw, with the bond of their deep love, the heart of the child there also, and as the clasp of parental affection drops from their cold fingers, they seem to lay it at the feet of the orphan's God, and the bereaved heart can breathe, "My Father," now in all the ardor of glowing faith. Where filial piety, and resignation, and filial faith meet at a parent's grave, *there* a mighty chasm is overleaped by the once lonely heart; we may rest the burning brow upon the very arm of our God — our Father — and feel the wing of protecting love wave over us, and the marble of a

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parent's tomb becomes the pure portal of our happy home, and the heart exclaims, "This is the gate of heaven!"

Yes! to the believer the "streets of heaven begin on earth." Its meadows, bright with flowers of angels' planting, border the fields of earth, and gladness and peace clap the wing, and point to the thronging, distant mercies of his God; while he sees, like a royal image, the features of divine benevolence stamped upon every blessing God has given, and the inscription on the reverse of affliction even, *is Heaven.*

GALILEE.

On glorious Galilee low sinks the day,
Tinting its bosom with all-varying dyes:
Green, crimson, gold, and purple swiftly chase,
As sporting rainbows, o'er its azure depths.

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Upon its margin, grew the fig tree wild,
And the tall palm stood almost motionless,
Its plumes just lifting to the evening breeze.
Groves of dark olive fringe the distant scene,
And the rich odor of the spikenard's bloom,
Borne soft and slowly on the evening air,
Steals to the brink of blessed Galilee,
As if it would embalm, in fragrance sweet,
The favorite lakelet of the Son of God!
Still is the scene, save that *one* tiny boat
(The bark of the disciples) spreads its sail,
Wooing in vain the loitering, fainting breeze.
Still is the scene; for the dense multitude
Have stole, silent and wondering, from that holy spot,
Where famished lips, fed by a hand *divine*,
That day had tasted a Redeemer's love.
They saw the bread he brake! A shepherd boy
Unrolled it from his mantle's tattered fold
At the disciple's word, and on the Lord
Fixing his soft blue eye, flung back
The clustering ringlets from his sunny brow,
And, with a smile of sweetest charity,
Said, "Master, 'tis *all* I have!
I would 'twere more! I can but add my *love*."
And there were matrons there, who said,

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"With what a look of love did Jesus' eye
Linger upon him there, as at his feet
He laid the offering." There were those
Who marked the rapture of the Master's look,
As he pronounced, in silver-trembling tones,
The deep and hallowed blessing.
They saw him break to the disciples; from their hand
They took, and lo! like manna dropping from the cloud,
The heavenly banquet rolls from hand to hand.
Gone is that multitude, and now *alone*
Kneels on the mountain-top the Son of God!
He prayed for them whom his right hand had fed;
He prayed for those whom his right hand should save,
For the loved few afar on Galilee.
And O, bend low, my soul — he prayed for *thee!*
His supplications ended, to the wave
He turns his weary steps, and his meek gaze
Bends on the distant scarcely-moving boat, —
For he is *loved* — for he is honored, honored by the world.
They proffer him a sceptre! He must fly,
For *he* is Lord *alone* of suffering,
And the sharp thorn must be his diadem;
And, though they call him the Anointed One,

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Not one frail vessel now waits his command!
But see! the Godhead blazes round him now,
As from the margin-green his sandalled tread
Is fixed upon the light and shifting wave,
In regal majesty omnipotent.
  The Lord of Nature treads upon the sea,
As marble pavement, solid 'neath her Lord.
Did conscious Galilee his footfall hear,
Nor dared to ripple till her God had passed?
But hark! a cry of terror from the boat,
As Jesus' snowy mantle they descry
Wave white and spectral 'gainst the rising storm.
"Fear not, my faithful ones; your Lord is nigh!
Fear not, belovéd, it is only I!"
  The word, like murmuring music, o'er the wave
Floats in soft cadences, until the ear
It gained of one who, faithful, loving, bold,
Exclaims, "It is the Lord! — Lord, bid me come!"
And, at the answer, bounds upon the wave.
He saw but Jesus! and his dark eye flashed;
He saw but Jesus! and his foot strode firm
And calm as monarch through his marble hall.
But the wind waved his mantle,
And from his swarthy brow the locks just lift.
'Tis night's cold breeze; and he upon the wave,

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The billows toss beneath him; fast he sinks! —
"Lord, save me!" — one low, supplicating cry,
And the wave closes o'er him. Quick as thought
The Lord of life is there; and his strong hand
Raises his favorite, and rebukes the flood.
O, "wherefore didst thou doubt?" O, let the word
That then echoed above the Galilean Sea
Resound through *life*, float above *death*,
And, as the pearly gates of heaven expand,
Let angels echo, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

THE CROWNING OF ESTHER.

Where Shushan's spires salute the rising day,
What mean the cymbals' clash, the streamers gay?
A thousand jewelled turbans glitter there,
And gorgeous vestments sable bosoms wear.
O'er tessellated marble, red and blue,
Assyria's damsel Schiraz' roses strew.
The lofty palace gates for once are free,
And through the portal high rings jubilee.
Within, how rich appears the fairy scene!
Egyptian hangings, fringed with gold, between
Pillars of silver, furl their drapery,

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To form a jewelled Eastern canopy,
Above a throne of Parian marble fair,
Inlaid with gold, and pearl and ruby rare,
While odoriferous fountains fling their sweet
And flashing spray, a monarch's eye to greet;
While floating through the pure and balmy air
Steal the pomegranate's breath, the citron rare,
And mingle with the cresset's scented beam,
Which from the fretted roof of silver stream.
A hundred slaves, in silence most profound,
On the pure pavement waiting, kneel around;
Their sable arms are bound with India's pearl;
Each giant arm can well the javelin hurl;
They, motionless as ebon statues, bow
Before Ahasuerus' kingly brow.
Strains of sweet Tyrian music softly float,
Mingled with Syrian cymbals' wilder note;
Sweet bells and silver psalteries' gentle lay
Proclaim an Eastern monarch's nuptial day.
A golden circlet round his forehead high,
Pride and dominion flashing from his eye,
Life in his smile, destruction in his word,
Waiting his bride sat Persia's haughty lord.
She comes! like vision of the dreamer's mind,
Sweet Esther! holy, gentle, meek, and kind.

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Like evening's peaceful star, her gentle ray
Is doomed to shine where heathen darkness lay;
Judea's loveliest daughter, fairest she,
Where *all* are fair, in sweet humility.
Bound in her tresses bright, the diamond shines;
Brilliants from Uphaz and from Ophir's mines
Combine their tribute to enhance her charms,
Gleam on her neck of snow, and grace her arms.
Yet sadness lingers on her polished brow;
Her drooping figure wears an air of woe;
While words of flattery die upon her ear,
Her eyes' long fringes drop the silent tear.
And yet, what may the mistimed sadness mean,
Where *all* are happy, save the lovely queen?
O, she is thinking of Jerusalem,
And Israel's outcasts — she is one of them.
The city, and the temple of her God,
Are dearer far than Shushan's proud abode.
She thinks upon the olive groves and hills
Of dear Judea, and the glancing rills
That poured their streams where Shiloh's softer lay
Rung its sweet music through the summer day.
Again she sees Mount Zion, bright and fair,
And Carmel, and the blooming lilies there.
Again, sweet Sharon's rose the chaplet binds,

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Messiah's emblem in her hair she twines,
While green Engedi's vine-crowned slopes arise,
And Bashan's fertile valleys meet her eyes.
She bounds once more upon the hill side free
Of lovely, peaceful, palm-crowned Bethany.
On fancy's ear the Levite's solemn song
Through the wide temple-courts its notes prolong;
She sees the holy cloud of incense rise,
As slow consumes the evening sacrifice;
Again the son of Aaron's voice she hears,
As the bright censer heavenward he rears,
Rise like the music of a silver bell—
"Blest be thy name, thou God of Israel."
Once more among Judea's daughters fair,
Does she the timbrel beat, the offering bear,
As circling the altar of their God,
The temple-courts with bounding feet they trod;
And Mordecai, her guardian and her guide,
The orphan's friend, again is by her side.
His mild and gentle accents meet her ear—
"My child, hope in thy God; Messiah's near."
And then she starts, to think a captive he,
And but a princely heathen's bride is she.
The ruins of Jehovah's temple lie
Where she beheld her favored parents die;

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And then again the tear falls silently,
For Israel's sorrow and captivity.
She passes on to kneel before her lord,
Henceforth to tremble at his slightest word;
And at his footstool falls so lowly there,
That o'er his sandal sweep her tresses fair.
The golden sceptre rests upon her brow:
"Thou art my bride, my own belovéd now!
My queen, my Esther, kneel no more to me;
Servant of Israel's God, I honor thee;
Rise, peerless daughter of Jerusalem;
Receive rebellious Vashti's diadem!"
While, as he spoke, the kneeling fair he raised,
And on her head the bright tiara blazed.
"O king," she said, "the crown I wear is one
Which glitters not beneath the beaming sun:
The signet of my God alone shall be
Bound on my brow — a diadem for me.
The servant of the King of kings am I;
I seek a kingdom and a home on high.
My hopes, my wishes, all are centred there,
And earthly diadems I may not wear.
Let me, my lord, dwell unobserved and free,
And share in Israel's lone captivity!
I rather Judah's daughter would remain,
Than over Persia's lofty realms to reign."

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ADORATION.

It is a sweet and a holy thing
To sing the praise of our blesséd King;
To touch the strings of an angel lyre,
As the lofty theme mounts high and higher; —

On Faith's strong wing to soar above,
And fall before the throne of love;
With the sainted ones above to kneel,
As the love of God their heartstrings feel; —

To leave the world and things below,
And feel the Spirit's heavenly glow;
While burning lip and heart confess
The glory of God our righteousness; —

On Pisgah's top to take our stand,
And view the hills of the better land;
'Mid seas of glory, and fields of light,
To watch the seraphs' dazzling flight; —

And listening bend, as their harping falls,
As angel-voice on angel calls;
And join in the gush of the blesséd choir,
As the lip is touched by the holy fire; —

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To mark where the Chebar-vision rolls,
Where the burning rainbow God enfolds;
To hear the rush of the cherubim,
And the soft, sweet song of the seraphim; —

With heart, and mind, and spirit bowed,
We lift the folds of the mystic cloud;
O, the spirit steals unsandalled here,
For she feels the Holy One is near.

THE ROSE-BUD IN THE CHANCEL.

[The following was suggested by the gift of a rose-bud, which fell from the coffin of a dear and lovely friend, as it passed down the aisle of a church.]

'Tis but a rose-bud — yet its leaves
Twine in Affection's wreath;
And where the heart in sadness grieves
Blooms this fair flower of death.

Yes! once this floweret's graceful head
Trembled beneath the dew,
Till plucked to deck the lowly bed
Of one as lovely too.

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Bound in a chaplet for the dead,
  A garland for the grave,
It fell when the last prayer was said —
  "The Lord hath ta'en, who gave."

Dropped from a kind and gentle heart,
  It found a resting place
Where earthly hopes and fears depart,
  Where fall soft showers of grace.

As if it mourned the sleeper there,
  It lingered for a while —
A holy emblem, purely fair,
  Dropped in that chancel aisle.

Was it to tell of her we mourn,
  Who ofttimes kneeléd there,
That others, by example drawn,
  Might join that chancel prayer?

O, we will join the angels' swell,
  For peace to us is given;
For though the *bud* to earth hath fell,
  The *rose* has bloomed in heaven.

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PIETY.

There are those who are such strangers to the sweet joys of religion, or so unhappily mistaken concerning them, that they speak as if devotion would lay a leaden hand upon the comforts of life. O, what a delusion! It is alone the child of God who is truly happy.

The Christian's heart, like a lightsome feather, trembles and quivers in the softest breath of a Father's love. His imagination, as a silver-winged butterfly of heaven, skims from flower to flower of God's goodness, and revels over the plains and meadows of his providence. Life seems to him like a harp, where many strings, broken and loose before, are now united by the sweet hand of devotion; and under her angel fingers what tones breathe from its silver strings!

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All Nature is vocal now. The starry heavens sing; earth's brightest garlands unite in the symphony, and thunders roar the chorus, "He hath done all things well." The fair flowers of earth weave, like gorgeous tapestry, their bright designs, and the rich pattern is the love of God. All Nature, like a peal of sweet bells, rings a merry chime on the grateful spirit, and calls every believer to her temple in thankful adoration.

O, there is a web-work of mercies over this beautiful world of ours; and its silver gauze flutters in the eye of faith, as if stirred by the soft breathing of angels! "What more could I have done?" challenges man from the little heather bell, and sweeps in a rustling sigh from the cedar of Lebanon. O, may gratitude nestle in every bud, and praise burst from the full-blown flower! "Then shall the

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earth bring forth her increase, and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing."

RESIGNATION.

"It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

Yes, submissive Eli, such is the language of the heart devoted to its God. The grandeur of its source makes the cataract of trouble only sublime and beautiful.

We feel a kindredship with saints and martyrs; we join hands with prophets; and feel a holy sympathy with a suffering Saviour, as we kneel beside the cross of sanctified affliction. It is sweet to lean our brow, fevered by the world's excitement, against its cold marble, and hear Jesus's silver tones saying, "Weep not."

How peaceful to recline, in some cave

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of earthly sorrow, with blessed Daniel, his only companion an angel, his pillow a sleeping lion! How triumphant to be placed in a condition where a world may exclaim, "Is thy God whom thou servest able to deliver thee?" How delightful to answer, "My God hath sent his angel and shut the lion's mouth!"

There is something sublimely beautiful in kneeling in the seven times heated furnace. The heart almost ceases to beat with holy awe, the spirit breaks forth in a sweet chime of joyful rapture, as the burning canopy rears its dome of glory above the Christian's head.

Let the untried heart seek the smooth path, and dread to approach the verge of the precipice; but to those who have known the tender mercies of our God, as displayed in times of trial, it is glorious to look down, from some dizzy point of

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faith, from some overhanging sorrow, upon the velvet valleys of God's goodness beneath.

"May the angel of peace soft wing never cease
To wave o'er the path where we tread,
While heavenly love, like a snowy-plumed dove,
Ever flutters in joy round our head;
For the heart which is blessed with the heavenly rest
That is found in submission alone,
May smile at despair, and may triumph o'er care,
As it kneels at the foot of the throne.

"I love to ascend to that heavenly Friend,
Whose eye bends in love on our path;
I love to regard as a matchless reward
Every cloud which seems gathered in wrath.
O for heavenly skill to read his high will
In the volume of providence fair,
Where in letters of gold does the story unfold
Of his love and his merciful care.

"Like an organ grand, touched by God's own hand,
Does life's swelling anthem arise;
From the notes of woe, sounding deep and low,
Rapture rings in a peal to the skies.

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O, sweet is the strain, though beginning in pain,
From the hand of our Father flung!
I love to hear that music so clear,
Though by it my heart strings are wrung.

"Life's a happy land, where his chosen band
Are spending their summer day,
Till autumn skies, with their glorious dyes,
O'er our hearts fling a mellow ray.
When the landscape here grows chilly and drear,
We will rise to our Father's home;
We will enter his gate, where bright seraphs wait,
And never again shall we roam."

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOYS.

O "THERE is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen." It is the winding track of the providence of our God and it is learned in the day of adversity.

There are those who are continually crying, "Who will show us any good?" But to the eye that is fixed upon its God,

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the landscape of life bursts with a glory which breaks upon it from another world. The very clouds of heaven pile, as a silver glory, around the goodness of God, and rose-tinted, as it were, in his smile, they float over the Christian's head, each bearing upon it some bright picture of future blessedness to his heart. The valleys dance and shimmer in the light of his Father's smile, as if some strong-armed angel had set ajar the door of heaven, letting a beam of golden joy stream down upon them.

They sing! — O how sweetly! And how may the sanctified spirit keep time to the measure! Yes, the singing of birds, the bleating of flocks, the dash of the waterfall, and the luxurious hum of insects, ring on the Christian's heart like a silver chime of the bells of heaven, and the delicious cadence is, "God is love."

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On every side are strewn the beauties, or rise the mountains, of the grandeur of his King.

He wants not the honors, the pleasures, or the riches of earth. What should he do with them? He is, like one of old, passing through the vineyards of Eshcol. A full cluster he may take, and, with a grateful heart, pass through, and leave the vine waving with blessings, thankful that it speaks to others the benevolence of his bountiful God.

While he passes through the harvest fields of time, his merciful Father permits him to pluck one ear, or what may suffice his need; and as the Hebrew in the waving plain beheld the blessing of God upon Israel, so the believer sees the blessing of God upon Zion in every good gift he hath strewn upon the earth; and while he takes the portion assigned him, rub-

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bing it in his grateful hands, he thanks the Lord of the rich harvest infinitely more for what is not his own. For, O, his riches are not here! Nor can earth endow him with any heritage but what would make him poorer than he is. His harvests wave in the fields of Omnipotence; his riches lie in the treasure-chamber of the mercy of his God. "He is satisfied with favor, he is full with the blessing of his God." Like Gideon, he wrings the dew of God's love from every fleece of earthly comfort, of spiritual enjoyment. Yet these are the poorest of his joys.

Faith loves to draw aside, like a silken drapery, the events of life, where, from the inner sanctuary of the love of our God swells the deep organ of his providence. How deep the music! how sweet the harmony! how each note trills and trem-

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bles on a grateful heart! Higher and higher the music of life peals upon the spirit, until it mingles with the liquid strains of the harps of seraphs; nor ceases then, but rings on, from lyre to lyre, exhausting the melody of choirs of cherubim, through endless eternity.

RENOUNCING THE WORLD.

WHAT a beautiful sight to the angels, what a delightful picture for the Christian to contemplate, to behold the young at the feet of Jesus, solemnly, earnestly renouncing the vain pomp of the world! to see them there lay down Saul's gilded armor, as a burdensome encumbrance, and receive from His hand a robe of dazzling whiteness, whose spotless purity converts it into impenetrable proof!

To the ear, indeed, there is a sound of

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self-denial in the words, "I renounce." And yet what is renounced, but sin, vexation, and sorrow, as an exchange for holiness, peace, and joy. Little does the world realize the mighty protection, the fountains of pleasure, and wreaths of victory, which thenceforth attend the believer, and thicken around him, in proportion as he observes his promise of renunciation.

But let it be thoroughly understood, not narrowed down, until it merely signifies resigning those amusements which lie along the borders of the forbidden. Shall this content the Christian? Is this the high standard of the followers of Jesus? Will they be satisfied with the character of being merely not immoral, while they agree with the world in what is termed innocent compliances? How can they agree with the world in any thing,

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when they have renounced the grandeur, the vanity, and covetous desires of earth, for the grandeur of heaven, the glory their God puts upon them, and the boundless treasures which flow from faith, hope, and charity?

And also, when we consider that which is *not* given up in renouncing the world, how light appears the self-denial! For instance, we do not renounce the pleasure arising from this beautiful creation, with its fairy flowers, its warbling melodies, and rich alternation of light and shade, sunshine and shower; but every flower thenceforth has for the heart some gentle lesson written upon it, inscribed there by an angel's finger; every silver star is surrounded by the halo of God's love; and over every green hill top and velvet meadow are wreathed rainbows of covenant grace and promises to the believer

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altogether unseen by the eye of the world. Neither are the pleasures of friendship renounced; but, sanctified and purified from the fickleness of earth, her hands weave garlands of heavenly myrtle; she binds, like rich flowers, the united hearts of his disciples upon it, and lays it as an offering at the feet of Jesus.

Nor are renounced the pure pleasures arising from a high order of intellect and a cultivated imagination; but even genius, baptized into the fear of the Lord, and robed in the graces of his Spirit, is continually laying at the feet of Jesus fresh wreaths of his love, which God is forever placing upon her brow, and, even in this world, joining in the angelic employment of casting crowns "at the feet of the Lamb."

O, if every human heart could fully realize that it is alone that which is pain-

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ful to the spirit which breaks its peace, and ties down the heart in its free soarings, — if they could but hear the murmur of the full fountains of pleasure which flow at God's right hand for his beloved, — all would kneel, and as from one heart pronounce, in deep tones of earnest rapture, the blessed promise, "I renounce the world."

THE GRAVE SEEN BY FAITH.

THE so much dreaded grave is to the Christian a jewelled portal lighted by the smiles of angels. Those gates, to him, are inlaid with the pearl of Jesus's purity, and beset with chrysolites of changeful blessedness, flashing beaming glories on his heart as he approaches them. Pain and sickness are but the turning of their silver hinges,

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and the cadence floats in a soft sigh across the Jordan, "Come!"

Christian, do you yet fear the tomb? Devotion says, "Come, thou child of Jesus, with me to the sepulchre; with the sword of the Spirit cut down the yew and the cypress which shadow it, while I twine around it wreaths of everlasting laurel." How heavenly Peace polishes its marble, until the soul sees reflected in it the joys of futurity!

Death struck his dart deep into the Saviour's side; the barb remained fixed in a wounded Redeemer; and, ever since, he has only struck his servants with a broken feather.

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JOY IN THE PROMISES.

THE sable curtains of affliction may drop, at times, full across the Christian's path; but it is only that he may learn submissive meekness, by feeling its velvet folds wave against his spirit. Soon the angels of Faith and Hope loop up here and there the curtain, and through the bright opening the rejoicing eye beholds clustering clouds of glory skirting the horizon; while in the distance is seen, it may be dimly, the rising dome of some temple of coming happiness. The blessing of God rests in heavenly dewdrops upon every flower of existence which blooms in the lot of those who love him; and under the dew of his blessing is the manna of his grace.

The thought that it is the Lord who

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"doeth all things well," makes all alike beautiful. It is his loving Father, it is his merciful Redeemer, that is moulding his condition, and the Christian knows that perfect symmetry must mark the design. Beauty must remain upon the canvas when the hand which is tinting it is perfection.

O that every one that names him would live up to the glorious privilege of walking with a present God! Faith may ever do so. Adversity, with many an iron chariot, may hem us round; yet, to the Tabor of his holy promise we may draw with ten thousand clustering hopes, and, in the spirit of a Barak, triumph over sorrow.

It is jubilee year to the Christian, when his glorious Leader commands him to enter the sea of affliction; for there, between the protecting walls of its heaped-

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up waters, the sublime bulwarks of his sorrows, he may clash the cymbals of gratitude and praise to the high chorus of the prophetess, "He hath triumphed gloriously!"

The faith of Jesus is an exalted, glorious, masterful thing; triumphing where others are overcome, mightiest in weakness, most joyful in deepest adversity. The storms and billows of this life, as they dash upon it, prove its adamantine strength.

Yes, it is the Christian's privilege, for trials and afflictions, to praise Him who has said, "Through much tribulation ye shall enter the kingdom."

Here, he may walk on the edge of the precipice, where the world dare not follow; here, on wings of Faith and Love, his spirit can soar to unimagined heights of the goodness of his God, testing daily and proving hourly some promise of Jeho-

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vah. O, the heart can bound from promise to promise, and revel among the mercies of its God, only in times of trial; but here, like the lark, though through the long night it has slept in the dark valley of sorrow and humility, when the morning smile of a Father's love breaks forth, it rises, singing, to his very throne, and dries its wings, wet with the tears of affliction, in the rosiest cloud of his matchless favor.

KNEELING IN PRAYER.

"THEN shall be said, all kneeling," occurs frequently in the rubrics of the Church service; and most pious the exhortation! How much beauty, how much humility, how much heavenly de-

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votion, cling around this simple precept! There is something touchingly beautiful in taking this lowest room before the Lord. The bowed head seems alone fitted to receive a blessing. The crowns of earth are formed for brows which are lifted in pride; but a diadem of glory, we may imagine, can only be placed upon temples bowed in the dust.

All kneeling! How lovely would the church militant appear in the eyes of a gainsaying world, if, at the words, every form was bent, every head bowed, within her bright courts!

It was thought, in the early ages of Christianity, that there were present at the assemblies of the Christians two churches; the kneeling church of Christ, who in those days never met but they bowed as one man, and a church of hovering angels bending above them, as they poured one

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mingled prayer to the God of all. And how must it daunt the powers and principalities of darkness to see Zion bend her beaming forehead to the dust in humble, heavenly supplication, while brilliant ranks of seraphs, her glorious guard, pausing on pinions of light above her, veil their star-like brows in confusion before a very present God — before the uncreated Majesty of heaven!

O that Christians would, in this, equal, if not surpass, the heathen! for the faint echo of revelation and the dim light of natural religion teach the proud Mussulman to bow in affected humility three times a day. And how much more would the world take knowledge of us, "that we have been with Jesus," if all kneeled in posture and in heart, wherever Christians are found!

It is related in history, that the Chris-

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tian legion attached to the Roman army, for refusing to pay idolatrous homage, was placed in the van to receive the fiercest onset of savage foes; but when the heathen's volleyed arrows flew, the Christians were all kneeling, and the breastplates of the Romans in their rear received the darts. And may not the arrows of affliction, the darts of the enemy, fly over the heads of kneeling believers, and be fixed only in those hearts that are too haughty to bow before their God? And when the church militant arises from her kneeling position on earth, to mingle "with angels and archangels, and with all the glorious company of heaven," to laud and magnify God's holy name, will she not, deeper in humility as higher in glory, kneel on the bright pavement of a Saviour's love, to all eternity?

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Kneel, Christian, kneel in lowliness,
  And pour the humble prayer;
When Jesus Israel's vales did bless
  He ofttimes kneeléd there.

Let earth's assembled nations bow
  In homage to our God,
Nor dare to stand where an angel's brow
  Is veiled before the Lord.

Not like the boasting Pharisee,
  With haughty heart unbent,
Should the sinner seek, great God, to thee
  His offering to present.

With humble brow, with bended knee,
  Approach the Lord, the King;
In sackcloth of humility
  Your meek petition bring.

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HUMILITY.

There is a grace, so holy and so bright,
It gems the thrones in heaven's utmost height;
Yet does its mild effulgence softly throw
A track of silver on earth's vale of woe.
The nearest handmaid of the Deity! —
Heaven's best belovêd child — Humility.
I trace her footsteps in the cowslip bell,
Hiding its beauty in some sylvan dell.
Behold the modest meekness of her look
Where the low willow bends beside the brook!
And in the lily of the valley see
The flower that is her banner's blazonry!
Her voice arises sweetly on the ear,
And pours a carol, high, and deep, and clear;
As darkness draws her ample curtains where
Sweet Philomela wakes rich music — there
I see her! And an angel form she wears,
And white-robed Innocence her vesture bears,
With pinions folded, calmly watching by
The slumbers light of gentle infancy.
She leaves the classic shades, where Science calls
Her thoughtful votaries to her lofty halls.
Where Fame her garlands of the laurel tree

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Is wreathing — *there* dwells not Humility!
Nor did her lowly sandal ever tread
O'er battle fields, where lie in heaps the dead.
Her pinion waves not o'er the tented field —
Her mirror never was a soldier's shield.
Where his fierce courser dashes o'er the foe,
And his bright sabre lays the vanquished low,
She leaves him, in his "garments rolled in blood,"
To seek, of earthly fame, his vain reward.
Nor will she with a passing glance admire
The brilliant beauty of the diamond's fire.
The brightest ingots of earth's wealthiest mine,
Heaped in her pathway, shall no longer shine.
She tramples on the vainly hoarded store,
And passes on, to notice them no more.
Where Grandeur glitters in her chariot gay,
And Fashion trips along the public way,
And Vanity and Affectation try
Each gaudy pinion of the woods to vie, —
Not *there* her home; she pauses but to trace
Her fair initial on some lovely face,
And heavenly characters thenceforward wear
The lovely features of some saintly fair.
Yes! there are those who point from earthly strife
The living lessons of a holy life —

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Who tread, as wingless angels, 'mid the crowd
Thronged by the vain, the selfish, and the proud.
Unfettered by earth's pageantry below,
Forth to their Father's holy home they go —
Handmaids of Him who thought it right and meet
To wash the lowliest disciple's feet.
Such are the lowly hearts that own her rule,
And such the teachings of her heavenly school;
Such were the early Christians, holy band,
Formed by her eye, led by her gentle hand;
Such were the hearts which followed in her train,
When, as a queen, she reigned on Bethlehem's plain.
Her palace, when she kept a festal day,
Was but a manger, where an infant lay,
While hovering angels gaze from heaven to see
The proudest triumph of Humility.
Her throne was built on barren Tabor's snow,
When heaven was bright reflected from its brow;
And brighter than the sunbeam's splendor glowed
The beaming forehead of the Son of God.
She stood beside the Galilean Sea,
When Jesus called the apostolic three;
No pomp, no learning fitted them to sway
A world, and bid it their meek Lord obey;
But from the humble traffic of the wave,

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They came, commissioned by their Lord to save.
Great her reward, and high her service, when
His feet she bathed with weeping Magdalen;
Who, with the silken tresses of her hair,
From her Lord's sandal wiped the burning tear.
A home she found with the belovéd three,
In peaceful, palm-crowned, lovely Bethany.
There spreads the banquet for her Lord to rest,
Where hallowed friendship at the board is blest;
Or at his feet, with trusting Mary, hear
Words that are music in an angel's ear.
But soon she weeps in sad Gethsemane,
Groans at Golgotha, faints at Calvary,
When, deep in lowliness, his sacred head
Bowed on his breast — the great Redeemer dead.
Yet soon a risen Saviour from the tomb
Shakes death's domain, and parts its darkest gloom.
No shining cherubim's angelic guard
Phalanx his steps, his way to heaven to ward;
But lonely to his scattered sheep he sped,
That mighty risen Herald from the dead.
No heavenly trumpet pealed the tidings forth
Of deepest moment and of greatest worth.
From a weak woman's tongue the tale is given
The sweetest news that ever rung through heaven:

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Jesus is risen — from the grave unbarred!
Jesus is risen! — heaven is secured!
Not in full glory armed did he arise
Up to his holy home beyond the skies;
Veiled in humanity, he rose on high,
All unattended, in his majesty;
While men of Galilee, on bended knee,
Beheld the end of Christ's humility.

A MOTHER'S DEATH.

JAN. 5, 185–.

THREE years ago my beloved mother lay cold and still in death, while the wild storm was sweeping by her death-chamber; and there seems a sympathy in the sighing of the gale to-day.

It is a sad — how sad! — yet an almost holy moment, when we look our last upon a *living* mother's face. Her tenderness, her self-forgetful love, — above all, the lessons of piety which she has instilled, — come

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crowding round the heart like weeping angels. From life's fair chamber, then all the bright pictures seem removed, and existence is draped in mourning! Mother dead! Into whose ear, now, can I pour my sorrows, and be sure of sympathy? To whom can I communicate my joys, and see their eye sparkle at the recital?

Dear mother dead! Who, in sickness, will steal around my bed with a step so soft? whose unwearied hand smooth the pillow? and whose tearful eye be dried alone by watching?

Memory steals silently into the darkened chamber! And she beckons across this motionless form to the sunny hours of childhood. Yet, cruel enchantress! it is only to let that sunshine play upon a fountain of tears. But hark! my spirit hears a lighter step than hers. A soft wing waves coolness on the burning thoughts. An an-

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gel form stands beside the bed, and throws a bright beam upon the pale, sweet face of the departed. Hush the sob of sorrow while *Religion* speaks! And let the tear that wells up affliction's spring glitter in the ray of the faith of Jesus, for a moment, and be dried *forever*.

"He doeth all things well," is the sweet message faith bears to the heart; and as death undoes a mother's arms from about our neck, faith, nay, faith's glorious Author, embraces us the closer.

O, the orphaned spirit can look up to heaven, and exclaim, My Father! now with a deeper emphasis of devotion, and a soft whisper comes floating through the fields of heaven, gently dividing ranks of seraphs, and fluttering down upon the heart, soft as a feather of light from an angel's pinion—"A Father of the fatherless is God."

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JACOB IN THE WILDERNESS.

WHERE lonely Nature bends her gentle head
To her glorious King, and there doth spread
Her palms in his way, where her God alone
Advances to make her temple his own,
Where Silence is waving her silken wing,
And Echo alone her bells does ring,
Where the sunbeam far o'er the desert fell,
A wanderer rests by a ruined well.
His glorious brow wears a shade of woe —
Forth from his father's house must he go!
And anon he brushes away the tear,
As his thoughts revert to his mother dear.
O, why did I borrow Deception's wile?
And why my aged father beguile?
Esau, full dear was thy blessing won,
That from the mother exiles the son.
Though home is distant, my God is near;
My steps he will guide — my prayer he will hear.
Then, weary and hungry, the wanderer lone
Laid his aching head on a mossy stone;
Yet bright was the vision that floated o'er
That sleeper lone on the dreary moor;

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The bright heraldry of heaven behold,
With brilliant spear and with harp of gold,
Wave their silvery wings o'er the sleeper there,
And pausing above him, as if to bear
His petition meek to the mighty Lord,
The fear of Isaac and Abra'm's God.
O'er a ladder of light the angels bound,
Which reaches from heaven to Canaan's ground.
As o'er him they hover in brilliant band,
Uniting their strength in a phalanx grand,
The mighty Jehovah, in purity
And love, is his glorious canopy.
"I, I will uphold thee!" his voice most high
Peals as the rolling thunder by.
"The God of thy father will hold thy hand,
And bring thee back to thy father's land.
Now, wanderer, go! In each path you tread,
The God of Isaac will shield your head;
For unborn nations shall from afar
Proclaim the rising of Jacob's star,
And generations to come shall combine
To praise the bright glory of Abra'm's line;
For earth's kindreds and tongues shall blessed be,
Jehovah's faithful servant, in thee."
He ceased, and the glorious vision withdrew,

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Fading soft and slow from the dreamer's view,
Yet the mystic ladder a while remains,
Linking heaven high and Judea's plains,
Till the last angel's vesture of white
Glittered above its rounds of light.
Then slowly faded that symbol divine
Of the Holy One of Israel's line.
The wanderer wakes from his slumbers light,
Transported with joy at the vision bright.
"This is none else but the house of my God!
This spot on which I so carelessly trod.
Here opens of heaven the pearly gate,
And here do the star-crowned angels wait.
If the God of my father my way will speed,
And will give me raiment and give me bread,
Will bring me again to my father's land,
And my father's house and my kindred's band,
O, then shall my prayers and my worship be,
God of my fathers, rendered to thee."

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NIGHT.

Brilliantly the clouds are weaving
  Chaplets for the dying day;
Evening's dews are sweetly breathing
  O'er the fields and meadows gay.

Where its brightest hues are blushing,
  Slow ascends the evening star!
Like past joys, but faintly flushing
  Sorrow's night that reigns afar.

Meditation's holy power
  Now ascends her dewy throne;
Claiming this, her vesper hour,
  Fraught with memories, as her own.

Angel feet, methinks, are treading
  Now on peaceful hill and vale;
Is't their harps my ear is heeding,
  Or the song of nightingale?

Now their shining ranks are bending,
  Pausing on a noiseless wing;
Earthward now their steps are tending,
  Round the servants of their King.

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Night, what memories surround thee,
  Beaming far beyond the tomb!
Surely God hath brightly bound thee
  To a glorious day to come.

Shadow of a bright to-morrow,
  Emblem of death's vale of fear,
Many a beaming star you borrow
  From a sky which gleams not here.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

God of the beautiful, God of the pure,
Meadow and mountain, and far-reaching shore,
Where waves the forest bough, where flows the rill,
There breathes the whisper of boundless love still.

Where the bright cloudlets of morning do lie,
Urging their barks through the deep of the sky,
Is it thy love beaming angels may know?
No; 'tis to shine on thy children below.

Why hast thou tinted with heavenly blue
The arches above us with exquisite hue?
Why decked with flowers earth's beautiful sod?
Why, but to tell of the love of our God?

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Yet is our measureless charter of bliss,
Glorious Being, exhausted by this?
No; but as if thou hadst given us nought,
Jesus from heaven our ransom has bought.

THE STILL SMALL VOICE.

Ask the soft breeze that flutters by
  What message does it bear?
Ask the bright cloudlet of the sky
  Who formed its fringes fair?

Dive in the dingle's deepest nook,
  Unveil the harebell there—
A tiny leaf in Nature's book—
  What lesson does it bear?

Follow the wild bird on the wing,
  Or seek its downy nest,
And ask the feathered, gem-like thing,
  Whose hand hath made it blest?

List! where the ocean's thousand waves
  Ring music from the shell,
That, in its deep and sounding caves,
  Chimes soft its silver bell.

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O, 'tis His voice the prophet heard
  On Horeb's trembling brow!
No trumpet terror to be feared,
  But love, and peace, and joy.

Unlock the dew-drop's casket bright,
  And set its diamond free;
Then ask its pure and trembling light
  Who gave its brilliancy?

Nature, how fair thy canvas shines!
  Where is the limner found,
Who thus, with light and love divine,
  Thy beauties doth surround?

Where shall I find that glorious One,
  Who "doeth all things well,"
That I may say, "Thy will be done"?
  Bright angel legions, tell.

I turn from Nature's beaming blush,
  I turn, full sad, to see
Immanuel, now "God with us,"
  In sad Gethsemane.

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GRATITUDE.

Praise, my soul, the glorious Giver
  Of all good to man below;
Purling stream or silver river
  From his loving kindness flow.
Where the folded bud is bursting,
  Read his love and trace his hand;
Where the tiny wild flower, thirsting,
  Meets the dew in angel band.

Hark! What gushing note of gladness
  Warbles from the wildwood bough,
Banishing the heart's lone sadness
  With the carol of its joy?
See! the galaxy of heaven
  Waves its burning banners far;
'Tis thy God's high love has given
  Every coroneted star!

Yet 'twere little — bird and fountain
  Would not give a sinner joy;
Velvet lawn and cloud-capped mountain
  Would but mock a world of woe.
Lo, he opens heaven's treasure,
  Flings its garnered store abroad;

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Mightest angels fail to measure
All the worth of Jesus' blood.

Yes, salvation, sweet salvation,
Gems with light each gift divine;
O, may earth's remotest nation
In the holy radiance shine.
Let man, the high priest of nature,
Low before God's altar lie,
Be the tongue of every creature,
And her censer wave on high.

Go, ye heralds of his glory,
Where Golconda's diamonds lie,
Go, rehearse a Saviour's story,
Ere their darkened millions die.
There display his burning banner,
Blazoned with his deeds of love;
While a shout of sweet hosanna
Echoes to his throne above.

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SUGGESTED BY THE PORTRAIT OF A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

Thou beautiful being! In shadows of night
You float o'er the heart like a seraph of light.
O, sad was the hour, and dreary the day,
When Azrael kissed thee, and bore thee away.

Affection deplored thee, — its idol was fled, —
And mournfully knelt by the side of the dead;
From life's gladsome garden the garlands were riven,
And withering lay by the portal of heaven.

Yet sympathy caught the low, wavering sigh
That burst from the heart as you mounted on high;
From memory's tablet thy portraiture drew,
And bright o'er the canvas thy loveliness threw.

That beautiful image impressed on the heart
Hath broke of affliction the fiery dart;
And while thy soft eyes beam in loveliness near,
Bright angels are bending thy harpings to hear.

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THE JOYS OF MEMORY.

MANY are the bright vistas, peaceful are the hours, to which memory points. She lays a paralyzing finger upon the busy wheels of life, and seems to stop for a moment the rapid rushing of the pinion of time; while, as if by enchantment, the happy hours of childhood, by-gone seasons of happiness, start into being, and the heart, conjured away from the weary present, retreads with a glad step the avenues of the past.

There is the old homestead; the moss on the porch, just as it was of yore; that tangled rose-bush just putting forth its blossoms, under dear mother's window; there is the little garden plat; the rural implements of labor — the spade and the trowel — just as father has left them; and a little more of memory's fairy work will bring the

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good old man to bend above them. Pause! brush away the tear, and turn from the spot.

There is the old apple tree, and the swing still vibrating, where we played so merrily. Hark! the ringing laughter has not ceased — it will never cease — but in fancy's ear the silver sound will ever echo round the spot.

But let us enter. We want to lean again upon that arm-chair, where God's word was daily read, which is now the bright rainbow which spans our life; its bright beam first glittered on the morning cloud of childhood. We want to see the little table where the garment was fashioned for poverty. We want to forget the cold tombstone, and those green hillocks, and sit again in that privileged, that holy area — the home of childhood. But why is it, when we review the past, that tears ever fall, and sorrowful thoughts hang a sort of gauze-like mist from

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point to point of the loveliest landscape? Will not memory be active in the future? Shall we not look back from the sweet fields of heaven? Shall we not remember the doings and dwellings of earth? We *may*, but not its sorrows. Then the holy deed will yield fresh sweetness; the sorrow, meekly borne for Jesus, like the wild thyme trampled upon, will emit new fragrance. And on the dying bed, how will the hovel of misery, visited for *His* sake, — its walls builded of bright beams of light, its porch mantled with clustering blessings, — gleam upon the closing eye!

That cup of water, that crust of bread, — forgotten as soon as bestowed, — you gave because He bade you. Hark! A voice rings through the dim arches of the tomb you now are entering. Put the words together; it is the sentence, "Ye did it unto me."

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And that little orphan, upon whose shelterless head you laid your hand in blessing — you could do no more — as you passed the crowded thoroughfare, now floats a cherub in the glory before you, and bursting through ranks of angels, seems impatient to welcome you.

These are the bright blessings of memory. This is her gala-day, when her left hand beckons services for Jesus from the past, while her right bends back the opening gate of heaven. These, these are her abiding treasures, and over her sorrows angels bind the inscription, "God shall wipe away all tears."

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ETERNITY.

Angels, pause on your sounding pinions,
As forth from the presence of God ye fly,
And tell me where, through His broad dominions,
Is reflected his own Eternity.

I look on Nature; — her lovely features
Grow wan and changeful beneath my gaze;
I look on the fairest of God's fair creatures,
Yet all are shrouded in Sorrow's haze.

I bend my steps where the dew-drop glistens;
It dropped from the rose, but the thorn was nigh;
Youth poured its song — I paused to listen;
It languished low in the mourner's sigh.

I gaze on the moon, but her silver veiling
The clouds just float through the heavenly blue,
And beside her the morning star is paling,
Till lost its light on the glistening dew.

I turn where Infancy's cheek is flushing
With dyes that rival the opening flower;
But the storm of life came rapidly rushing,
And swept the bud from the household bower.

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O, where is the land where the blight of sorrow
Ne'er marked as fleeting each lovely thing?
Here brightest days bring a sad to-morrow,
And loveliest sunsets a shadow fling.

Yet bloometh above Elysian gardens,
That bend in the breezes of heavenly hills,
Where blessed bands, watched by angel wardens,
Drink joy from Eternity's boundless rills.

PRAISE.

It rings not alone through the arched roof of the cathedral, where the organ peals forth solemn praises, touched by the finger of Devotion, and the cherub Gratitude folds the wing and kneels in adoration by the altar of the Most High. O, no; not there alone do the sacred laudits of his praises flow in a full tide of rapture. "Praise ye the Lord in the beauty" of innocence, if not "of holiness," gushes from the artless throat

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of the wild bird. It sighs softly in the wave of the bending willow; and, Praise, praise the Lord, whispers in a mellow murmur from the brook by its side. The glitter of the sunbeam flashes letters on the Christian's heart, which syllable its Maker's goodness. And the silver moon takes up the sentence where day dropped it, and writes in a track of silver God's matchless praises.

Nature collects her choicest flowers, and waving her censer round creation, flings their odoriferous praises to the hand that tinted them so fair. And higher still, archangel tells archangel the praises of his God, and seraphs answer through the veil of their bright wings, in a peal of "Holy, holy!" while highest heaven echoes to the pean of their praise.

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FAITH.

Come, holy Faith, bow from the heavenly realm,
  Wave thy broad wing and bear my spirit up;
My bark is sinking — seize its faltering helm,
  And sweeten with thy smile affliction's cup.
Undo thy portal fair of massy light,
  And point, bright being, to our holy home;
Dispel the wreathéd clouds of gloom and night,
  Which hang their folds around the lonely tomb.

She comes, and beautiful the visions are
  That float like waiting angels in her train;
She comes, with amaranthine chaplets fair,
  To crown the brows of care, and woe, and pain.
She comes, and music through the prison rings;
  The wilderness, beneath her angel tread,
Bursts into beauty; and the lily flings
  Its peaceful fragrance o'er the holy dead.

Affliction's brier bears thornless roses bright;
  Life's surges, silver-crested, seek the shore,
And sorrow seems the changing chrysolite
  Engraved by Heaven, which Aaron's bosom bore.

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Where waves the tempest wing, there rainbows beam,
And Baca's fountain falls so soft, so fair,
Its valley, blooming, 'neath the shower, might seem
A fit abode for wandering angels there.

HOPE.

From the bright regions of immortal day,
Hope, glorious angel, bows her silver wing,
And through the mists that veil her starry way,
Her dazzling visions on the eye doth fling.
Sweeter than siren's is the liquid chime
She warbles as she flies through bowers of bliss,
Pointing with palm branch to a fairer clime,
Whose palest beauties far outrival this.

In the death chamber waves her glittering robe,
And Health and Peace, twin cherubs, bear her train;
Gently she hushes sorrow's struggling sob,
And pours her poppies round the couch of pain.
Softly she wipes the mourner's tear away—
She shows a glittering crown, each tear a gem,
And weary hours, lit by a heavenly ray,
Shall add new spangles to that diadem.

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Welcome, sweet Hope! fair herald of delight;
Kind is thy visit to our world of woe;
Baca's sad fountain in thy smile grows bright,
And joy shall ripple in its onward flow.
"Hope on, hope ever!" shall our motto be,
Till at the golden city's pearly gates
Hope disappears — while blessed Charity,
To crown our hopes of heaven, with angels waits.

WHOSE IMAGE AND SUPERSCRIPTION HATH IT?

Yes, afflicted one, whose image and superscription hath it? Turn the bright reward from the treasury of sorrow in your hands: whose image does it bear? What limning angel graved upon it the attributes and mercies of thy God?

Pleasure, honor, wealth sparkle in the treasure-chamber of the world, but they are coined in the mint of worldly feeling. They are dim with the rust of selfishness;

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they bear the image of worldly ambition, and the superscription upon them is, "Vanity of vanities." Even the more pure and refined gold of earth — intellectual attainments, social intercourse, domestic happiness — though they bear bright and beautiful images, though their tracery is graven by the finest feelings of the heart, and the writing upon them sends a keen thrill of enjoyment through the soul, yet their superscription is *mortality*, and the letters become less and less legible; and as we gaze upon them, the damps of death sully them, and, tarnished and worthless things, they are cast aside for more enduring treasures.

Grave the superscription of earthly coinage on blocks of marble, write it on plates of brass, yet, "Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," still leaps out from the lettering, until, an undistinguishable

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heap, the treasury of ambition mingles with Cæsar's dust.

Yet not such, Christian mourner, the heavenly prize of your lot. The love of your God is its gilding, and it bears characters of divine stamp. Each line upon the holy coin is a purpose, each stroke has a bearing for you on eternity. The loving looks of a reconciled Father beam from it — for whose image does it bear? And from its flashing "superscription," bright as the Shechinah's flame, read, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

"Read the heavenly superscription
Which the gold of sorrow bears;
Read it, daughter of affliction —
Let it dry thy falling tears.

"Yes, 'tis Mercy's royal features
Make each sorrowing hour light;
God's love written to his creatures
Is the superscription bright.

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"'Tis the signet stamp of heaven
Hath impressed each weary day;
'Tis a treasure God hath given;
Cast not, then, the prize away.

"Heaped upon the floor of glory
Shall the heavenly treasure lie;
Bear, for joy is set before ye—
Pleasures which can never die."

NAIN.

The sun on gentle Bethlehem has cast its sinking ray,
Capernaum's spires are gilded in the latest beam of day,
And Lebanon with crimson blends its pure and snowy wreath,
While down the sides of Olivet the spicy perfumes breathe.
The favored lakelet of the Lord, with wave of green and gold,
By verdant hill and city proud, and sepulchre, is rolled,
And peaceful Bethany's fair palms bent low their graceful head,
As by them, at the noontide, passed a Saviour's sandalled tread.

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All day the burning beam has flung its rays upon his brow,
And wearied with his journeying, he seeks a shelter now.
He turns away, where luxury its canopy hath wove,
To seek a lowlier resting place, 'neath yonder cedar grove.
Though cities, in their lofty pride, with sparkling spires appear,
Yet Nain, in its humility, to Jesus is more dear.
Within those ample gateways, to enter should he deign,
The loud hosannas of his praise would ring across the plain,
And haughty Scribe and Pharisee the costly feast would spread,
And bid the lowly Nazarene rest there his weary head.
The glory of his miracles has reached those lofty spires;
The prophet famed of Galilee each wondering heart admires.
But he, whose eye omnipotent reads every human heart,
From plaudits of the multitude turns sadly to depart.
The haughty Roman's floating plume reflects the crimson ray,
As sinks upon the gate of Nain the Syrian summer day;

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His frowning brow relaxes — he sinks the glittering spear,
As through the ample gateway is borne a lowly bier.
As pass that train of mourners, with slow and silent tread,
The bearers' manly forms declare that youth's bright sun hath fled.
The heavy foldings of the pall the moulded form betray
Of youth in manly beauty — a widow's only stay.
She follows with uncertain step, she clasps that silken fold,
And then adown that withered cheek the scalding tear is rolled;
And then, anon, as pauses now the bearers' heavy tread,
Her silver tresses mingle with the ringlets of the dead.
Her stifled sob of agony hath reached a pitying ear;
A hand omnipotent is laid, in mercy, on the bier;
An eye, in pitying love, hath marked that bowed and widowed form —
A love that, even in its glow, the heart of death shall warm.
Beside the dead the Mighty One of Nazareth is seen;
His look of deep compassion hath stilled that anguish keen;

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He folds the heavy pall away; and now, without a tear,
That mother can behold her son — she feels her God is near.
Jesus hath touched that marble hand, hath spoke the word, Arise!
And quick the mantling lifeblood to cheek and temple flies.
"My son!" "My mother!" break alone the solemn stillness round,
As, in one long embrace, her lost the widow's heart has found.
Then, side by side, adoringly, at Jesus' feet they fall;
They own him the Messiah — the Lord and Judge of all.
And while, with loud hosannas, the crowd around him throng,
One smile he gives the kneeling pair, and meekly passes on.
So mighty in thy matchless grace, so lowly in thy love,
Thou glorious Messiah, now wear the crown above.
All praise to the Redeemer! When we in sins were dead,
He touched our bier, and o'er it life and full salvation shed.
He stayed the sword of vengeance — redeemed us by his blood;
Now, robed in immortality, we rise to meet our God.

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THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

EARNESTNESS, zeal, enthusiasm, are, and ought to be, essential elements in the Christian character, from the greatness of the truths which he believes, from the grandeur of his hopes, the difficulties of his path. Religion baptizes life in a fountain of glory, and quickens the pulses of the soul in the race for immortality. He must, he *must* press others to the service of a Lord all love. He must share his high gain of blessedness with all the world. Religion — high as heaven — broad as the universe — loses nothing of blessedness to the individual, by sharing its prize with all mankind.

When the mind reverts to the sublime joys of faith, and contemplates the measureless fulness of a blissful eternity, it is

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impossible to repress the warm glow of a holy enthusiasm — not the wild expressions of fanatic zeal, but the deep, pure, ardent breathings of a heavenly joy.

Earnestness, moreover, ought to be the characteristic of the believer. If a God is to be glorified; if a sceptre is to be won; if a world must be renounced; if on the Christian's lip burns the message which is to awaken that sleeping world, and capture it for heaven, — surely, devotedness and the most glowing zeal become the Christian.

By zeal is not intended authoritatively setting before another the doctrines or the words of truth: no; it is the stronger argument of love — love that shall break through the opposition of a fallen nature, that waits — waits long — its opportunity to bless, and seizes it when most injured.

Yes, the Christian, exposed to ten thou-

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sand foes, which must all disappear before his divine panoply, must be actively engaged. Not Joshua, surrounded by seven nations of enemies, could more linger than he; not Joshua, sheathing his victorious sword, knows more of conquest than will the humble, Christ-like believer. And to those who strive manfully, to those who work earnestly, the "Well-done, enter into rest," will soon cheer with its sweetness.

A little while, and the harvest will be reaped on the floor of heaven; "a little while," and the conflict will be over; a little while, suffering Christian, and the last pain will be ended, the last trial will be borne, and the full rush of immortality's joys will gather around you, while through the glory, flashing as "stars in the crown of your rejoicing," beam the trophies of your earnestness on earth.

O, how poor, then, will seem our high-

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est service, how weak our strongest effort, when the Lamb shall lead us beside the still waters of comfort, and when we shall abide in the love of our God forever!

CONSOLATION.

WHERE the tempest-cloud is spreading,
Mark the bow amid the gloom;
Where cold night its tear is shedding
Will the morning-roses bloom.

Where its wings the dark hour foldeth,
Swiftly comes the dawning ray;
Where the tomb our dear ones holdeth,
Angels roll the stone away.

Wait, and watch! A bright to-morrow
Hangs on every weary hour;
Heavenly harps from sighs may borrow
Notes of higher, holier power.

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